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DOCKET NO. 98-MET-069C1
SERIAL NO. 09/443,160
PATENT

REMARKS

Claims 2-21 were pending in this application.

Claims 2-7, 12-17, 20, and 21 have been rejected.

Claims 8-11, 18, and 19 have been objected to.

Claims 2, 12, and 20 have been amended as shown above.

Claims 2-21 remain pending in this application.

Reconsideration and full allowance of Claims 2-21 are respectfully requested.

I. ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claims 8-11, 18, and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Applicant has amended Claims 2, 12, and 20 as shown above. Based on the reasons for allowance given in the Office Action, the Applicant respectfully submits that these amendments place Claims 2, 12, and 20 (and their dependent claims) in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of Claims 2-21.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 / § 103

The Office Action rejects Claims 2-7 and 12-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,475,823 to Amerson et al. ("*Amerson*"). The Office Action rejects Claims 2 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,854,921 to Pickett ("*Pickett*") in view of *Amerson*. The Office Action rejects Claims 2-7 and

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12-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Amerson* in view of *Pickett*. The Office Action rejects Claims 2-7 and 12-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Amerson* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,706,224 to Srinivasan et al. ("*Srinivasan*"). The Office Action rejects Claims 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,850,138 to Engebretsen et al. ("*Engebretsen*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,615,357 to Ball ("*Ball*"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Applicant has amended Claims 2, 12, and 20 as shown above. Based on the reasons for allowance given in the Office Action, the Applicant believes that these amendments place Claims 2, 12, and 20 (and their dependent claims) in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 102 and § 103 rejections and full allowance of Claims 2-7, 12-17, 20, and 21.

III. CONCLUSION

The Applicant respectfully asserts that all pending claims in this application are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests full allowance of the claims.

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SUMMARY

If any outstanding issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of this application, the Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below or at wmunck@davismunck.com.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees connected with this communication (including any extension of time fees) or credit any overpayment to Davis Munck Deposit Account No. 50-0208.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVIS MUNCK, P.C.

Date:

March 20, 2006



William A. Munck
Registration No. 39,308

Docket Clerk
P.O. Box 802432
Dallas, Texas 75380
Tel: (972) 628-3600
Fax: (972) 628-3616
Email: wmunck@davismunck.com